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Fearless

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Editor's Choice:

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Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

The opening of the second instalment of Cornelia Funke's new **Mirrorworld** sequence finds Jacob Reckless desperately seeking a cure for the Dark Fairy's curse. This was imprinted in a moth-like tattoo on his chest in the first book and is slowly but surely counting out his life. There is no simple answer, and back in the Mirrorworld, and reunited with his shape-shifting companion, Fox, he finds himself committed to a ghoulish quest to retrieve the head, hand and heart of Guismond, the long dead notorious witch slayer. Once made whole, the corpse promises somehow to reveal the whereabouts of a deadly crossbow. This weapon, while reputedly having the power to save Jacob if he has the courage to endure its bolt in his heart, is also the most potent engine of war ever seen in the Mirrorworld, with the ability to wipe out entire armies at a stroke. Consequently Jacob finds himself in a race with a rival treasure hunter, Nerron, employed by the King of Lotharaine, a monarch whose political ambitions are as twisted as his spine. Funke's mining of the rich seam of European folktale, forged and refined by an imagination both fertile and devious (perhaps she, too, has made some diabolical bargain), once more produces a tale that is mesmerising and labyrinthine, rich in details of setting and character, way marked with danger and conflict, as violent and tender as its source material, and full of the thrilling unpredictability of magic and plain humanity, courage and cunning, loyalty and treachery. Funke is one of the few writers for young people who can sustain constant visceral excitement alongside subtle character development, work on a scale that is both epic and personal, and, while telling us only what we need to know, suggest the depth and breadth of a most ambitious creation. And it is not done yet. A third book is on the way.

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